

First Unitarian Society of Newton
OPERATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES
Wednesday August 14, 2013
Alliance Room, 7:00 P.M.

Present: Susan Bartlett, Jeannie Chaisson, Alan Cody, Laurel Farnsworth, Anne Hess-Mahon
The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm.

Covenant ~ As we, the members of this Council and staff, gather to serve this congregation in leadership, we commit to ourselves and to each other ~to be present and prepared for the work of this meeting; to listen well and contribute respectfully; to balance both our short and long-term visions with fiscal responsibility; to support the decisions of the Council; to uphold the democratic process; and to lead with goodwill and faith in the work we can accomplish together.

▶ Invocation / Chalice Lighting ~ Susan

▶ Election of Ops Council officers ~ All

Council Chair ~ Susan Bartlett - unanimous

Vice Council Chair ~ Laurel Farnsworth - unanimous

▶ **Council committee liaison selections** ~ All

Various comments and preferences were expressed, as to which Council members would be liaisons to which FUSN committees. It was agreed to wait for Andrea Kelley's presence to make final choices.

Laurel pointed out that Alan is no longer **liaison** between the Board and the Council. Jeannie offered to attend Board meetings from time to time, as did Anne. Perhaps attendance at Board meetings could rotate among Council members. Schedule to be determined.

▶ Some discussion followed regarding **roles and responsibilities of the Board and the Council** and communication between the two entities, particularly regarding which entity handles which aspects of budgeting. Alan proposed a joint meeting to discuss this issue. Charlie Watts and Strom Thacker are current overseers of FUSN's finances.

▶ Laurel mentioned that the Council should focus on community engagement, as a precursor to FUSN's next **capital campaign**. The UUA's Wayne Clarke will assign a consultant to FUSN for the capital campaign. The Council would like to have input on the decision of who that consultant would be.

More discussion in anticipation of FUSN's next capital campaign: A key to FUSN's prior capital campaign was to identify major donors to get started. Also, more mid-level donors need to be found for this next campaign. Alan commended the benefit of having a consultant do a feasibility study about what results of the campaign might be possible in the FUSN community. A joint meeting of the Board and Council was proposed for the coming year to review these issues.

► A priority for this year also needs to be getting the new **Assistant Minister** settled and integrated into the FUSN community in 2014, especially to fill in aspects of the gap left by the Membership Coordinator's departure. It was agreed the role of the Assistant Minister needs to be clarified.

► **Operations Council retreat** ~ All

Council members agreed that a retreat would be a worthwhile endeavor, in terms of setting goals and getting energized for the coming year. Laurel recommends having an outside leader. Anne agreed and also suggested that at least part of the retreat be without the leader, so the Council could review the ideas raised. Topics for focus were suggested for the retreat. September 7th (?) was proposed.

► **Approval** for Pan Mass Challenge concert ~ All

Let the minutes show that a spring Ops Council meeting approved a request by George Batchelor to have a Pan Mass Challenge fund-raising concert at FUSN, at a reduced rental rate.

Financial

► **Year-end treasurer's report** ~ Alan

The full final Treasurer's report will be delivered in September.

The first Finance Committee meeting for the coming year is September 3rd. The committee will issue an updated report.

► **Pine Village Security** ~ Laurel

Pine Village parents and teachers have expressed concerns about security. Non-school people who use FUSN's facilities often walk through the classroom corridor. The back door (to the parking lot) is currently kept unlocked, and Pine Village would like it to be locked, to avoid people *entering* without being seen. *Exiting* through the back door is not a problem, since it has a push bar.

To create better security, one proposal is to put an alarm and buzzer on the glass door between the office hall and the classroom hall, to better monitor who may enter the classroom area. School parents and teachers would use the tower door, with a camera, to monitor that entrance. This is an ongoing discussion. Pine Village will pay the costs for installing any of these options.

► **Update on outstanding pledges** ~ Wendy (yours truly, Assistant Clerk) explained the process for following up on prior-year unpaid pledges. It happens over weeks and months, usually starting contact with those who owe the highest amounts. A final report is always issued at the end of the process each year to the FUSN Administrator and the Ops Council chair.

► **Update on committees without chairs** ~ Susan

By-laws does not have a chair, but it was felt none was needed at this time. Denominational Affairs has been without a chair for a couple of years. The critical Annual Budget Drive and Fellowship Dinner committees both need chairs.

The Memorial Committee does not currently have a chair. Laurel has been handling physical aspects, such as the niche wall and memorial garden. Kate Mason, as lay minister, may be handling other aspects, such as talking with congregants and purchases.

► Input for “causes” fundraising discussion in September, which should include the Council for Social Action, RE, others ~ All

Per discussions in the Council last year, the issue of fundraising, whether goods or money, through FUSN channels, including on FUSN property or through the FUSN email lists needs to have both clear process and schedule. FUSN needs to be sure that fundraisers are 501(c)3s and limit the number of such activities, so the congregation is not overwhelmed with requests.

The CSA should approve requests that are not RE affiliated. The CSA and RE should coordinate scheduling of their fundraising projects. It was agreed that FUSN would like to support worthy projects but not so that there are too many “asks.” In addition, such activities should be at tables only; individuals should not be solicited. It had also been discussed last year that at least one Sunday per month should be fundraiser- and petition-free.

Another idea is to have fundraising-free space for coffee in the Alliance Room. Alan reminds us that funds raised should not be written to the fundraising organizations on FUSN checks, which sometimes go uncashed and make accounting difficult. Also, individuals must always get approval for any fundraising at FUSN. Jeannie will draft a policy-procedure statement. Alan had written a statement last year about getting approvals for fundraising.

► Procedures for reviewing minutes ~ Wendy

The use of Google Docs vs. “regular” Word docs by email was discussed. Last year, we started using Google Docs for Ops minutes. Google Docs provides a single document in a single location, which everyone can view, comment on and see changes. With Word and email, changes are suggested individually and may include multiple emails with documents attached or pasted. It was acknowledged that the specifics of how to use Google Docs is an issue for

some. It was agreed that we would start with Google Docs and see how it goes.

▶ It was noted that signage for summer services needs to be created. A couple of weeks ago, some first-time visitors had no idea where to go, and all street-side Sanctuary doors were locked. Jeannie mentioned that FUSN could use its 2 sawhorses as information sandwich boards. They can also be used during the regular year, especially at the back door. Jeannie will follow up with Jacki Rohan's Small Group Ministry to see if they would like to make inserts for the boards. Jeannie will also get Erin's input, in terms of content.

▶ Thank yous ~ All

Dwight Golan fixed the back door with a new panel of seasoned oak provided by his neighbor. Laurel will write thank yous to them both and provide a note to the newsletter.

▶ Anne will draft a blurb for the FUSN Newsletter summarizing tonight's meeting.

▶ The meeting adjourned at 9:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Schwartz,
Assistant Clerk